

United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- + Security Council calls on Liberian Transitional Government to convene meeting of all factions to draft disarmament plan; says free and fair elections cannot be held until disarmament substantially completed.
- + Chairman of Special Commission on disarmament of Iraq reports major success in implementation of Security Council resolutions.
- + UNHCR tells Economic and Social Council of need for United Nations operations to progress swiftly from relief to development action.
- + General Assembly President begins official visit to Republic of Korea.
- + Cyrus Vance has meetings with delegations from Greece and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in New York; talks to resume in autumn.

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The Security Council today called on the Liberian National Transitional Government to convene a meeting of concerned factions by 31 July in order to agree on a realistic plan to resume disarmament and a date for its completion. In a statement read out by its President, Jamsheed Marker (Pakistan), the Council reiterated the need for free and fair elections in Liberia, which could not be held until disarmament was substantially accomplished. It warned that continued delay in disarmament might adversely affect international participation in the Liberian peace process. The Council asked the Secretary-General to report by 2 September on the situation in Liberia and to provide options for the size and mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL).

The Council demanded that hostile acts against personnel of the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States' Monitoring Observer Group (ECOMOG) end immediately. It further demanded that all factions cooperate fully with humanitarian relief organizations. The Council urgently

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called on Member States to provide financial or material support to enable ECOMOG to fulfil its responsibilities in accordance with the 1993 Cotonou Peace Agreement.

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The Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on the disarmament of Iraq, Rolf Ekeus, today reported to the Security Council that there had been "major success" in implementing relevant Council resolutions, according to a United Nations spokesman. However, Mr. Ekeus noted that it would take six months to iron out any problems with the system for monitoring and verifying Iraq's capabilities, after it became operational next September. While Iraq had cooperated with the Commission, he could not rule out the possibility that it had undeclared capabilities from programmes prior to the Gulf War.

Last week, the Special Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said the destruction of Iraq's prohibited weapons and capabilities was almost complete. In a statement issued after talks with the Iraqi Government in Baghdad, they said that whatever remained would soon be addressed through technical talks and independent verification. Regarding monitoring and verification, missile inspections had been completed, and short-range missiles had been tagged. Monitoring protocols had also been completed for major chemical facilities. In the nuclear area, the environmental monitoring system was well established, according to the statement.

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The representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) today told the Economic and Social Council that the agency often found itself in situations requiring development rather than relief action, but where there was no suitable partner to assume that responsibility. The Council was discussing the problems of coordinating humanitarian assistance, emergency relief, and rehabilitation and development.

The UNHCR representative said there was a need to strengthen emergency development capacity so that relief operations could be phased out more swiftly. The growing number of Security Council resolutions with references to humanitarian concerns had resulted in a blurring of the lines between political, military and humanitarian actions. He called for humanitarian assistance, development programmes and political initiatives to work in tandem.

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General Assembly President S.R. Insanally (Guyana) today began an official visit to the Republic of Korea with a courtesy call on President Kim Young Sam. Mr. Insanally will leave the Republic of Korea on Saturday for a visit to Japan, where he will meet with Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama.

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Next Wednesday, the Assembly President will travel to Stockholm, Sweden, to attend the third round table in a series on global changes organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

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Mediator Cyrus Vance has held separate meetings in New York with delegations from Greece -- headed by Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias -- and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia -- headed by Foreign Minister Stevo Crvenkovski -- according to a United Nations spokesman. There was a serious exchange of views during the meetings, which took place between 10 and 13 July, and it was agreed that discussions would resume in the fall. Mr. Vance has been mediating with a view to resolving the differences between the two countries pursuant to Security Council resolution 845 (1993).

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